

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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P 310705Z AUG 76
FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6113
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
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AMEMBASSY SANA

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: APER, KU, BABG
SUBJ: AGRICULTURAL ATTACHE FOR THE ARABIAN PENINSULA

REF: (A) STATE 212493, (B) 75 KUWAIT 3202, (C) 75 KUWAIT 181323,
(D) MANAMA 1243

1. EMBASSY WELCOMES OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW QUESTION OF ADVIS-
ABILITY OF ASSIGNING AGATT TO SAUDI ARABIA/GULF AREA AND
SPECIFICALLY RESIDENT IN KUWAIT.

2. EMBASSY REACTION REFLECTED IN PARA 1 REF B THAT PERIODIC
VISITS OF USDA REP WERE MORE EFFECTIVE MEANS OF PROMOTING U.S.
FOOD SALES IN KUWAIT STILL PERTAINS. ACCORDING TO ROUGH
ESTIMATES BASED ON DEPT OF COMMERCE STATISTICS, U.S. AGRICULTURAL
EXPORTS TO KUWAIT HAVE RISEN STEADILY FROM \$19.8 MILLION IN
1973 TO \$41.5 MILLION IN 1975, ACCOUNTING FOR BETWEEN 11 AND 13
PERCENT OF TOTAL U.S. EXPORTS TO KUWAIT DURING THESE YEARS.

3. THIS LARGE GROWTH IS OF COURSE DUE TO INCREASING OIL WEALTH
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BUT ALSO INDICATIVE OF THE FACT THAT IN KUWAIT, AND PRESUMABLY

THROUGHOUT THE GULF AND PENINSULA AREA, LOCAL FOOD MERCHANTS HAVE BEEN BUYING AMERICAN FOR YEARS. MUCH OF SALES OF U.S. FOOD ARE SELF-GENERATING. ALSO, AMERICAN FOOD SALESMEN ARE AMONG THE MOST KNOWLEDGEABLE AND FREQUENT OF ALL U.S. BUSINESS VISITORS TO KUWAIT. THEY HAVE PRODUCTS WHICH ARE EASY TO SELL AND FOR WHICH THERE IS A LONG-ESTABLISHED MARKET. INDICATION OF HOW WELL ESTABLISHED MARKET IS IS FACT THAT U.S. FOOD EXPORTS HAVE RETAINED THEIR 11-13 PERCENT SHARE OF TOTAL U.S. EXPORTS TO KUWAIT IN 73-75 PERIOD, EVEN WITH OVERALL 250 PERCENT INCREASE IN U.S. EXPORTS TO KUWAIT DURING THAT PERIOD.

4. AS NOTED IN REF B, THE ROLE OF USDA/FAS IN PROMOTING YEARLY VISITS OF FAS' REGIONAL MARKETING SPECIALIST SHEPARD UNDOUBTEDLY HAVE HELPED SALES. LOCAL EMBASSY COMMERCIAL STAFF CAN PROVIDE INFO ON MAJOR OPPORTUNITIES, HELPED BY MARKETING STUDIES AND TRADE PROMOTION EFFORTS, ALREADY FUNDED BY USDA.

5. QUITE CLEARLY, OF COURSE, THERE IS NO REAL ROLE FOR AG ATT IN PROMOTING AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPEMENT PROGRAMS IN KUWAIT, OR THE REST OF THE SAUDI/GULF AREA FOR THAT MATTER.

6. THEREFORE, EMBASSY COMES TO SUBSTANTIVE CONCLUSION THAT, AT LEAST INsofar AS KUWAIT IS CONCERNED, RESIDENT AGATT WOULD ADD LITTLE IF ANYTHING TO PROMOTION OF U.S. FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL SALES HERE. MOREOVER, THE SITUATION AT THIS POST HAS DRASTICALLY CHANGED ON THE ADMINISTRATIVE SIDE SINCE EARLIER (AUGUST 1975) EMBASSY REACTION (REF B) WAS PROVIDED. SINCE THAT TIME, KUWAIT-U.S. MILITARY RELATIONSHIP HAS EXPANDED SIGNIFICANTLY. A YEAR AGO, ONLY 3 USLOK (LOCAL MAAG) FAMILIES WERE AT POST WITH 9 PROJECTED; WE ARE NOW FACED WITH THE LIKELY PROSPECT OF 20 U.S. MILITARY FAMILIES TO SUPPORT BY JUNE 1977.

7. IN MEANWHILE, TOO, HOUSING SITUATION HAS BECOME DESPERATE. RENTS HAVE SOARED AND WE ARE HAVING DIFFICULTY FINDING SUITABLE HOUSING FOR DCM, WHICH WE EXPECT WILL COST OVER \$25,000 ANNUALLY. IF WE WERE TO GIVE UP REMAINING 3 STAFF APARTMENTS, WE COULD EXPECT TO HAVE TO PAY BETWEEN 500-750 KUWAITI DINARS (KD 1 EQUALS U.S. \$3.50) FOR EACH APARTMENT. MOREOVER, WE COULD ANTICIPATE MORALE PROBLEMS SINCE PRESENT RESIDENTS FIND LIVING ON ATTRACTIVE EMBASSY COMPOUND PROVIDES ADVANTAGES NOT FOUND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ELSEWHERE. BECAUSE OF HIGH COSTS AND PARTICULAR DUTIES OF CURRENT OCCUPANTS OF STAFF APARTMENT, AMBASSADOR HAS TAKEN POSITION THAT THIS SPACE WILL NOT BE RELEASED FOR OFFICE PURPOSES UNLESS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY.

8. THUS, ON ADMINISTRATIVE GROUNDS, EMBASSY COMES TO CONCLUSION THAT ASSIGNMENT OF AGATT AND SECRETARY WOULD PLACE UNDESIRABLE BURDEN ON ALREADY OVERWHELMED ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF.

9. AS A FURTHER COMMENT, WE WISH TO NOTE THAT, ALTHOUGH KUWAIT IS GEOGRAPHICALLY A CENTRAL LOCATION, THIS IS CERTAINLY NOT THE CASE IN TERMS OF AIRLINE TRANSPORTATION. SCHEDULES AND CONNECTIONS FOR TRAVELLING IN GULF AREA AND TO SAUDI ARABIA ARE POOR IN CONTRAST TO THOSE AVAILABLE FOR CAIRO, FRANKFURT AND LONDON.

10. IN SUM, WE SHARE MANAMA'S VIEW (REF D) THAT VISITS BY FAS WASHINGTON BASED REP HAVE BEEN SUFFICIENT FOR PROMOTION OF U.S. AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS BEYOND ACTIVITY ALREADY DONE BY EMBASSY E/C STAFF. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THERE WOULD BE ANY SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN U.S. FOOD EXPORTS BECAUSE OF A RESIDENT, RATHER THAN WASHINGTON-BASED, USDA REP AND THE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN THAT A RESIDENT ATTACHE WOULD PLACE ON THIS EMBASSY WOULD THUSNOT SEEM TO BE JUSTIFIED.
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